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ABSTRACT

The Partnership Assessment Project (PAP) sponsored by The Partnership for Arts, Culture, and Education in Dallas (Texas) examined the effect of community arts and culture programming on achievement in language arts, particularly writing, among students in elementary urban schools. The project spanned four years and constituted a three-year pilot study that laid the groundwork for a one-year experimental research study. Teachers in the PAP showed high levels of commitment; four teachers participated for four years, two for the final two years. A qualitative study examined the attitudes and perceptions of these six teachers toward the project. Teachers demonstrated growth across time. The most commonly noted problems involved scheduling artists and programs into the school and bus scheduling. By the fourth year of the project most teachers were successfully integrating the community programs into the curriculum. The end of the project left teachers with changed attitudes and tools for new growth. Among the factors in change management the most crucial was the attitudes of the teachers toward the project. For such a study as this one to be successful three factors must be present: teachers' receptivity to change, a game plan that considers the complexity of change and the need for time. (Contains 17 references.) (JLS)

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From Isolation to Integration:
The Change Process in an Elementary School
The Teachers' Perspective

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From Isolation to Integration:

The Change Process in an Elementary School

The Teachers' Perspective

The community as a classroom, conjures the notion of students sitting on the floor of a museum, clipboards on their laps, pencils in motion, as they recreate hieroglyphics observed on sacorphagi. The community in the classroom invokes a picture of students intensely involved with a docent from a natural history/science museum who is demonstrating the process Egyptians used to preserve bodies for burials. An artist in residence takes the same students on a journey of sight and sound as he introduces them to the construction of and playing technique associated with Egyptian drums, and their use in burial ceremonies. From these community-as-classroom experiences students can, with guidance, create their own understanding of the phenomenon of Egyptian burials.

Cities of sizable population, such as Houston, Los Angeles, New York, New Orleans, Dallas, Chicago, Seattle, and many more, offer their communities of learners multitudes of venues from which to garner in depth knowledge about times past, as well as a glimpses into the future. Museum docents, performing arts groups, individual artists, scientists, and cultural specialists enter the classroom/school with the intention of providing students with experiences in learning that make meaning of basic information. The arts and culture presenters' knowledge and understanding of the concepts they present extends well beyond textbooks. The presenters' energy and enthusiasm for the subject inspires and encourages students to reach beyond to a higher level of comprehension and appreciation for knowledge and learning.

Partnership Assessment Project

The Partnership for Arts, Culture, and Education (PACE), which operates in Dallas, Texas, an umbrella organization that encompasses forty-seven arts and cultural organizations that provide enrichment programming for students in Dallas, sponsored a project to determine whether community programming made a difference in student achievement. The Partnership Assessment Project (PAP) examines the effect of community arts and culture programming on achievement in language arts, particularly writing, among students in elementary urban schools. The project spanned four years and constituted a three year pilot study that laid the groundwork for a one year experimental research study. Data generated from the project reflect both qualitative and quantitative forms.

The expectations of the Partnership Assessment Project mandated change for the teachers involved. These changes included curricular, instructional, assessment, and communication. Changes of this nature require distinct techniques that incorporate concerns for the users of the innovation (Marsh, 1985; Hall, 1985; Rutherford, 1986; Stiegelbauer, 1986; Hord, 1986; Michelle, 1988; Busick, 1992; Francis, 1995; Huling, 1983;). The Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM) provides the tools necessary for change facilitators to provide support and guidance for participants involved in change management (Rutherford, 1983;.

Change Management

Change management in schools requires several factors that foster success. These factors find basis in Fuller's theory (Hall, 1985; Pratt, 1983;), that purports that the student concerns should be the focus of pre-service teachers. He notes that these concerns fall into three categories that include non-concern, concerns for self, and concerns for pupils. These relate to self, task, and the impact of teaching. These concerns do not follow a lock-step and can occur anytime throughout the implementation of an innovation. Fuller

contends further that arousal, resulting from an affective experience requires intervention or resolution, guiding the user of the innovation to a cognitive level of operation.

Hord, et al (1987), building on Fuller's work developed the Concerns Based Adoption Model. The model consists of functional parts that include: survey of concerns, levels of use, and innovation component checklist matrix. Each part provides the facilitator and user of the innovation with valuable information that guides the management of change. As stages of concern progress from awareness to refocusing, various forms of intervention provide the needed direction to aid the user in continued successful management of the innovation. The stages consider the persons concerns that effect him/her directly as they use the innovation. Stages of concern are ascertained through unstructured conferences, formal survey of concern, and completion of open-ended sentences.

The levels of use table provides the user and facilitator with pertinent information regarding actual use of the innovation. These levels range from non-use to renewal. Levels are determined through structured interviews conducted by the facilitator who then recommends intervention accordingly.

The innovation component configuration matrix provides the users and facilitators with written documentation regarding level of use. The matrix delineates the components of the innovation and provides a graphic representation of variances of the innovation that range from preferred to non-acceptable. The matrix provides a ready visual cue of progress toward the preferred variance of the component. The information suggests certain intervention strategies.

Insert Table 1 Here

Change management research suggests that change embodies many factors. Osborne (1993) noted that change is uncomfortable, accomplished by individuals, and best understood in operational terms. Stiegelbauer (1986) suggested that change management in schools is effected by the nature of the principal's style, outside sources, and clarity of the innovation. Change comes about when change is guided by support, sequential strategies, team work, monitoring, and corrective action. Although Hord (1995) indicated that most users of innovations remain in the mechanical level of use and management stage of concern for the majority of the time during an innovation, Sevilla (1992) found that within one year teachers displayed extended their use to impact levels, indicating that more rapid change occurs when users of the innovation display commitment to the project.

Teachers in the PAP, though somewhat leery in the early stages of the project, showed high levels of commitment to the intent of the project. The change facilitator conducted regular unstructured interviews and corresponding interventions throughout the school year and during summer in-service training sessions. The principal supported the project and facilitated the inclusion of up to ninety-six community arts programs during the second year of the project.

At the termination of the Partnership Assessment Project in the spring 1996, five teachers from self-contained classes and one teacher of talented and gifted children from many different classes remained as participants. Four of the teachers participated in the project for the entire four years and the other two joined in the last two years. All were employed in the school during the four years of the project. These teachers represent 12% of the population of teachers trained in the summer of 1992 and 7% of the total population of teachers introduced to the project in the fall of 1992.

Method

A qualitative study was conducted to examine the attitudes and perceptions of these six teachers toward the project. Using a grounded theory approach to the question of what teachers perceived about the project, no assumptions were made regarding teachers' responses. The method used to generate data was interview. All six teachers gave emic style taped interviews that involved them speaking freely and without form about their perceptions of the project from their perspective. The interviewer informed the teachers in advance that their interviews would be open-ended and they should be prepared to discuss the project openly, from their perspective. The interviewer occasionally intervened with open-ended questions that furthered the discussion and probed deeper into the perceptions of each participant. Teachers willingly shared their ideas about their past experiences, both positive and negative, and offered suggestions for the continuation of the project. Their insights serve as the basis for future study in community classroom collaborative efforts such as the PAP.

Although each teacher followed a different format while discussing their participation in the project, central topics emerged from the group. The data, transcriptions of the tapes, were analyzed using the qualitative data analysis program, *Folioviews*. The analysis yielded five major topics that included: community experiences, project impact on students, project impact on teaching practice, components of the project, and the future. Each topic subdivided into numerous subcategories. Within subcategories patterns emanated, representing the group view of the project. This study examined the data using CBAM instrumentation to suggest both levels of use and stages of concern. Data were then aligned with the timeline of the project, by teacher interviewed, to determine the overall progress of the teachers toward change management.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed across three levels: use, concerns, and timeline. The units of analysis ~~was~~ were words and phrases. Each teacher's interview transcript was coded by the eight levels of use, seven stages of concern, and twelve events across the time period 1992-1996. The twelve events include training during the summer, school year implementation, and mid-year training opportunities. References to any of these times were coded and accompanying indicators of levels of use or stages of concern aligned with the dates discussed.

Results

Teachers demonstrated growth across time as indicated in Figures 1 and 2. The figures graphically illustrate that across time most teachers functioned between mechanical and renewal levels. This finding supports the supposition of Hord (1995) that most users of innovations maintain at the mechanical level for longer periods of time. In spite of this trend, the teachers reported high levels of use.

Insert figures 1 and 2 here

The mechanical problems noted most regularly involved scheduling artists, programs into the school, and busses. An additional complicating factor in scheduling artists resulted from artists-in-residence who elected to follow their own path as opposed to adhering to the agreed contract determined by the teacher and artist. One teacher reported that although an artist was scheduled to guide the students through a dramatic presentation of historical figures that had researched, she decided to teach the students Elizabethan dance instead. Her reasoning was that it had worked so well at the school she worked in yesterday. The teacher tolerated this breach of contract, taught the drama herself, and did not invite the artist to return the following year.

Several teachers discussed the difficulty of creating viable space to bring in stage performances. The physical situation involved using the cafeteria as an auditorium. The custodian folded all the tables, constructed a portable stage, and realigned the chairs for each staged performance. This had to be done between 8:15 am and 9:00 for the performance and broken down ready to serve lunch by 10:45 due to the overcrowding in the school. Several teachers remarked on the mechanical difficulties of managing a performing group that arrived even fifteen minutes late, which occurred several times. The teachers soon recognized that coordinating with each other for same programs benefited all.

In a large urban district, such as Dallas, many busses are available for field trips into the community. The teachers found that availability and access differed considerably. Several teachers encountered busses that failed to show on appointed days and put students on busses arranged by organizations that did not coordinate with appropriate performance times and dates. These mechanical problems are problems these teachers encountered prior to the project and persisted throughout. These were out of the hands of the teachers.

However, the mechanical problem most faced was providing the researcher with needed documentation. Every nine weeks students produced written responses to performance assessment tasks that reflected their understanding of the relationship between the community and the curriculum. During the first three years of the project, teachers rarely had the completed tasks ready on appointed dates, which they set in the previous summer. During the summer of 1995 teachers and the facilitator created an innovation component configuration matrix that delineated the aspects of the project. When considering the component of timeliness of submissions, most recognized their unacceptable level of operation. Strategies for structuring instruction and time management were discussed. Consequently, during the 1995-96 school year, five out of six teachers moved into the acceptable range of operation, elevating their use from mechanical to routine on that one component.

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When asked to describe their method for preparing students to produce the written responses, five out of six teachers reported levels of routine and refinement. One mixed age first and second grade teacher detailed how she had the students write sections of the response across a three day period. During that time they referred to their portfolios, critiqued each others' work, and adjusted responses to gain higher scores on the rubrics. By the fourth year she had relinquished learning to the students who monitored each other as she guided the class through the process of response.

By the fourth year of the project most teachers were successfully integrating the community programs into the curriculum. In most cases, the teachers used the same program selections in the third and fourth years. During the third year they worked through the mechanical problems and management concerns. Four out of six teachers used the same musician across the four years and found new ways to incorporate his drumming technique. All teachers who used this artist commented on his level of cooperation and willingness to accommodate the connections between the music and curriculum as the teachers perceived it. The mutual collaboration relieved the teachers of that concern and allowed them the freedom to integrate the artist's music in a meaningful way.

In five out of six cases, teachers progressively moved into the highest levels of use across the four years. However, the teacher of talented and gifted students reported that she had on occasion found a routine way of approaching the innovation. Across all four years, this teacher referred to personal concerns on a very intense level. She intimated that her circumstance of non-self-contained caused some difficulties. She fretted over her status in the school mentioning continuously that, "especially with my schedule and the restrictions placed on me by not having a class of my own.. I'm at the mercy of the other teachers...I stay so frustrated all the time." She displayed concerns for the students and the difficulty of working in a "pull-out" situation. However, these were dwarfed by personal concerns, particularly about the future.

The project funding terminated in the spring of 1996, leaving the teachers with changed attitudes and tools for renewal and growth. All of them discussed the future and considered perspective of funding for continued community programs, the new curriculum proposed by the principal, and the direction of their instructional decisions. At this time their concerns dropped to information and personal. Several discussed their intentions to continue to design their own curriculum in spite of the unknown nature of the future.

Most striking was their projected level of use of the innovation. All of the teachers knew that the principal was bringing in a new curriculum, and some, out of fear of the unknown, returned to a projected orientation level of use. However, most considered the new curriculum as a challenge to take the lessons from the PAP innovation and apply them to the future opportunity to renew and grow. Several teachers reported that participation in the project "changed their lives" and that they would never return to field trips without integrating the experience into the curriculum. This type of response contrasts with Rutherford's findings (1986) who noted that teachers in a role change position view change from five positions: no knowledge, hoping the change will pass, questioning change, faking it, and accepting the sad truth.

Implications

The implications of the examination of the data suggests that classroom teachers can change their attitudes and practice of providing community arts experiences for young learners. Teachers in the PAP entered the project aware of the offerings in the community, yet had not considered a means by which to integrate them into the core curriculum. During the first several years of the project the teachers struggled with the mechanical aspects of incorporating numerous community programs into the daily schedule of an elementary school.

Several factors account for teachers' concern for impact and higher levels of use. The first factor involves empowerment. Several teachers reported that they felt empowered

to make their own decisions and accept the consequences of their choices. One teacher stated that during the second year of the project,

> The first real year (1993), I don't remember how many things I chose, but there was something going on every other week. Sometimes it was more than one thing a week. I realized real soon that that wasn't an effective way to go. That I loved going on field trips and I loved having people coming to my room, and that was so neat an so fun, but after a while, you could see that the kids were almost jet lagged. It's like, Oh my God, NO. Not another fun thing, please, no.

Her sentiments reflect a common thread among the teachers in the project. They were able to recognize their own errors in judgment and make adjustments.

Another factor contributing to the successful change management involved the interventions. The change facilitator met with the teachers informally every eight weeks to determine levels of use and stages of concern. At these times small management problems were resolved and the project proceeded. Larger interventions were applied in the summer inservice training sessions that occurred between the school years. The change facilitator examined the levels of use and stages of concern and arranged for inservice that directly addressed the observed needs.

The most poignant example was the dearth of information and skill building provided during the 1993 summer training on performance assessment development. The speaker selected, failed to provide the tools necessary for the teachers to develop the tasks. Throughout the year they struggled with the weakness of the tasks they had produced during that summer. During the summer of 1994 an expert with a long history of success in training teachers in the development of performance assessments guided the teachers through the process. Several teachers mentioned that this presenter "turned the project around for them."

The most crucial factor in the management of change was the attitudes of the teachers toward the project. Although they admit that they didn't fully understand the

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research aspect of the project they believed in the arts as important in a child's learning. They displayed deep concern for the lack of formal arts instruction in the classroom and willingly accepted the community arts programs as a surrogate. All of the teachers had involved their students in community programs for many years, therefore the challenge of integrating it into the curriculum seemed intriguing to them.

Conclusion

This study supports the contention offered by Rutherford (1986) that in order to improve the change process, several factors must be present. First, teachers must be receptive to change. In the PAP, teachers volunteered to participate in the project and willingly adjusted the methods of instruction to accommodate incorporating the community into the classroom. Second, there must be a game plan that considers the complexity of change and the need for time to make change happen effectively. The PAP was designed to span four years with the plans for bi-monthly episodic and annual full-scale intervention of inservice and support.

Bumgarner (1994) reports that the majority of artist-in-residence programs entering elementary schools across the United States, rarely find connection with the curriculum. The teachers in the PAP project constructed connections and fostered the growth of student knowledge and understanding through tailored integrated curricula. The use of CBAM tools aided in the management of change from "community exposure" to the "community in the classroom" as an integral part of learning.

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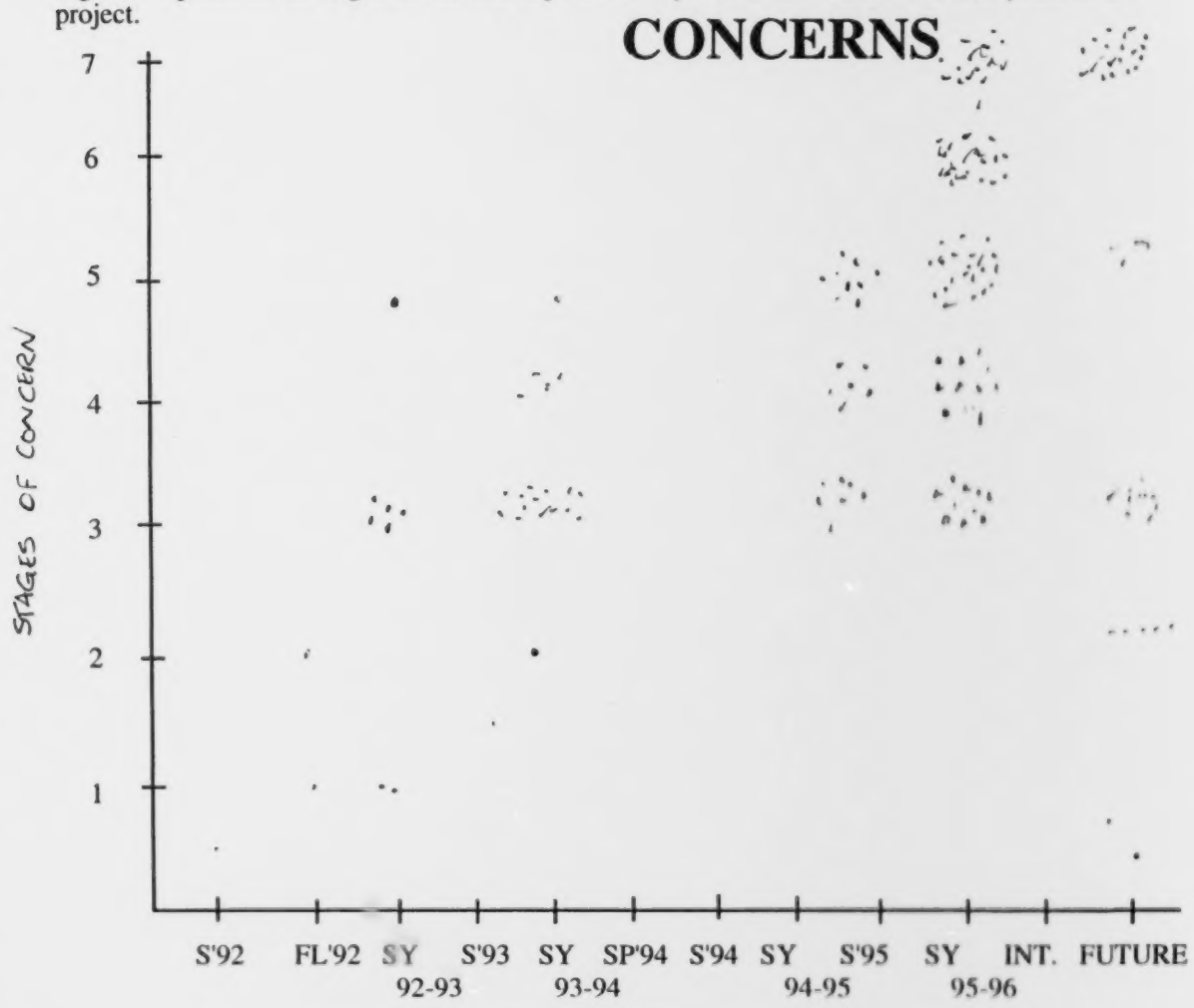
Table 1

Table 1 delineates the range of concerns and levels of use included in the Concerns Based Adoption Model.

LEVELS OF USE	CONCERN STAGES
VI - RENEWAL	7 - REFOCUSING
V - INTEGRATION	6 - COLLABORATION
IVB - REFINEMENT	5 - CONSEQUENCES
IVA - ROUTINE	4 - MANAGEMENT
III - MECHANICAL	3 - PERSONAL
II - PREPARATION	2 - INFORMATION
I - ORIENTATION	1 - AWARENESS

Figure 1 represents the stages of concern experienced by the teachers across the four years of the project.



Timeline of Partnership Assessment Project

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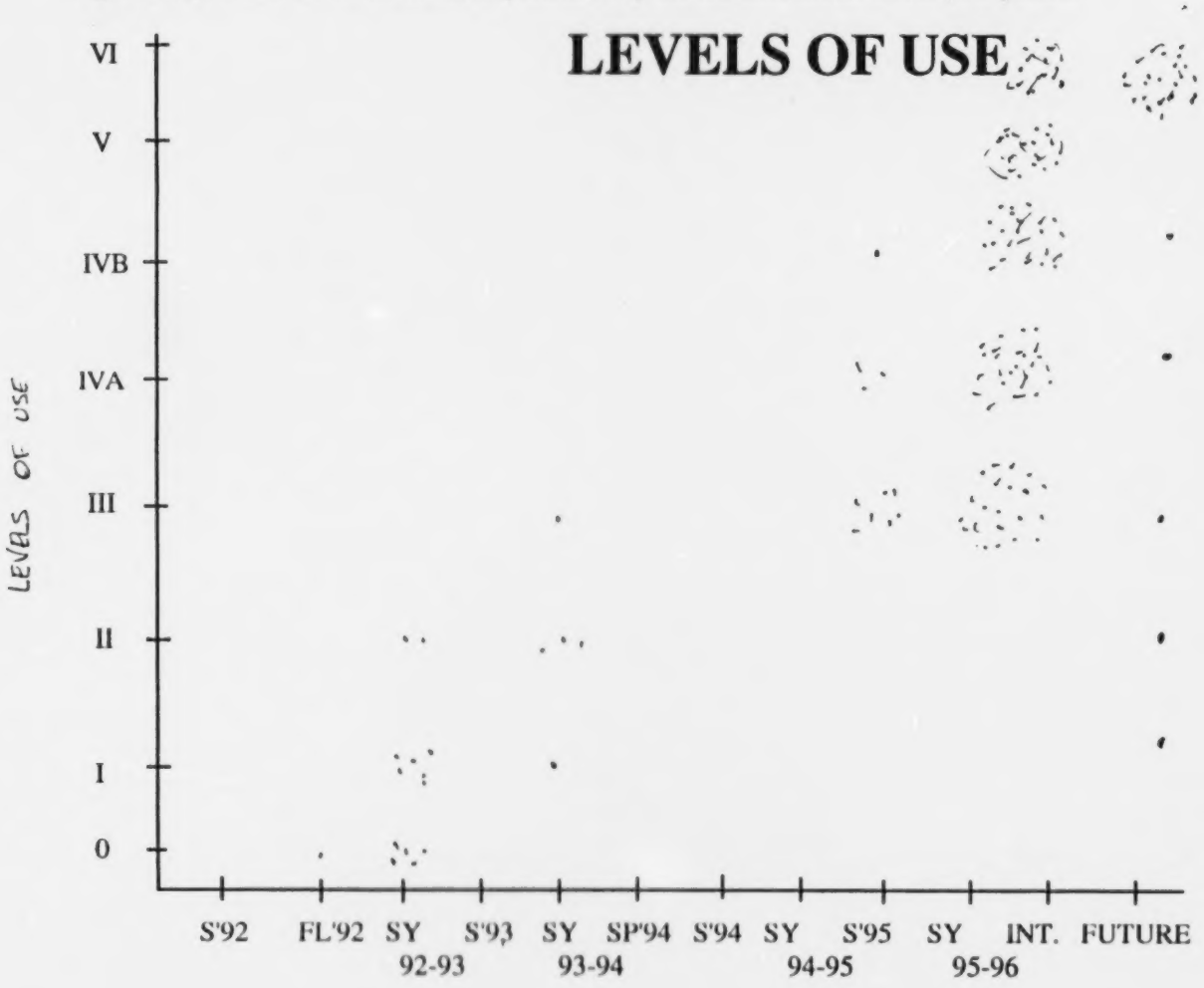
Figure 2 represents the levels of use experienced by the teachers across a four year period.



Timeline of Partnership Assessment Project

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